

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 756  
By Shepard

A RESOLUTION to recognize the many contributions of Judge William D. Field, Sr. of Dickson on the occasion of the observance of the bicentennial celebration of the founding of Dickson County.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly are particularly pleased to celebrate historic milestones in the histories of the counties of this state and to specially recognize the significant contributions of leading citizens of such counties and their communities to their growth and development; and

WHEREAS, one such progressive community is Dickson County, which has been celebrating its bicentennial, and one such outstanding citizen is the late Judge William D. "Bill" Field, Sr., a prominent farmer, public official, civic activist, and community leader who served 27 years as County Executive of Dickson County, a national record for service in that position; and

WHEREAS, the fifth child of six children, William D. Field, Sr. was born in Dickson County near the present location of City Lake on July 21, 1932, to Robert "Bob" Lee and Ethel Seymour Field. His father founded Dickson Hatchery in 1926 which grew rapidly and at one time was the 5th largest chicken hatchery in the United States; and

WHEREAS, growing up on the family farm on West Field Road, young Bill Field, like his brothers, worked at the hatchery and attended school in Dickson where he graduated from Dickson High School in 1950. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Husbandry from the University of Tennessee in 1954; and

WHEREAS, returning to Dickson, Bill Field began a dairy farm operation with his brother Sam that would last until 1984. For 30 years, every day, at 4:30 a.m. Judge Field rose to milk his dairy herd and would often remark that he "did his best thinking for the County" during those early morning hours; and

WHEREAS, an extremely bright and ambitious young man, in 1966 Bill Field responded to the requests of friends and neighbors and offered himself as a candidate for the Quarterly County Court but vowed not to campaign. His father, the day before the election, placed a campaign advertisement for young Bill in the local newspaper supporting his candidacy. Despite initial poll results, a final vote canvas showed that Bill Field won by 3 votes; and

WHEREAS, Bill Field quickly won the respect and admiration of his colleagues. When a vacancy occurred in the office of County Judge they quickly appointed him to fill the remaining term; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the possibilities for progress in Dickson County and understanding the vital role the County Judge could play, Bill Field ran to fill the remaining four-year term in August 1970. He used his candidacy as a platform to garner support for a referendum to consolidate the county high schools asking voters to approve the plan even if they did not support him; and

WHEREAS, Judge Field won the election and the good people of Dickson County adopted the referendum, as well as giving him his first political victory as County Judge. Not planning to seek re-election, Judge Field worked tirelessly to provide greater services for the citizens of Dickson County by overseeing the establishment of Dickson County High School, which opened in 1972, and successfully obtaining federal funding to build and operate a new Public Library Building, which opened in 1973; and

WHEREAS, it has been said that the secret of Judge Field's success was that he never cared who got the credit. Successfully re-elected in 1974, the prosperity of Dickson County under Judge Field's able leadership continued with the organization of a county-owned ambulance service, a new county nursing home and a new courthouse office annex; and

WHEREAS, a true man of the people who never "got above his raising", Judge William D. "Bill" Field was a visionary leader who wanted the best for every citizen. During his tenure, Dickson County would establish a new county highway garage, two new jails and a juvenile court temporary holding facility. He initiated the first sanitary landfill in Dickson County, was instrumental in passing county-wide zoning and organized the Planning and Zoning Department; and

WHEREAS, continuing his strong commitment and support for education, Judge Field worked closely over the years with Dickson County School Superintendents James E. Sullivan, Noah Daniel, George Caudill, and David Peeler to build several new schools, including White Bluff Elementary, Warf School, James E. Sullivan Middle School, Oakmont Elementary, and Stuart-Burns Elementary; and

WHEREAS, the legacy of the efforts of Judge Bill Field extend beyond the boundary of Dickson County as exemplified by his establishment of the first alternative school in Tennessee which he authorized during his service as Juvenile Judge, a responsibility tied to the Office of County Judge until 1982; and

WHEREAS, sharing his concern and compassion for people, Judge Field's devoted wife, Marilyn Lightfoot Field, was a longtime employee of the Tennessee Department of Human Services, having started with the County Welfare Department in 1957 and ultimately rising to the post of Regional Director of the Department of Human Services in 1998; and

WHEREAS, respectful of his wife's knowledge and expertise, Judge Field pursued her desire to provide a homemaker program in Dickson County to assist disabled and elderly citizens, like programs Tennessee sponsored in Nashville, Memphis, Chattanooga, and Knoxville. Working together, they developed the first rural homemaker program in Tennessee. Its subsequent success led to the Tennessee takeover the next year and replication of the program in every county in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, perhaps Judge William Field's greatest legacy was his recruitment of industry and the development of diverse job opportunities for the citizens of Dickson County. In cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce and the City of Dickson, Judge Bill Field led an outstanding team of industrial recruiters who brought major employers to the industrial park which resulted in Dickson County's enviable growth rate in citizens, homes, and commercial ventures; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his contributions to industrial development and Dickson County's tremendous progress the Dickson County Commission renamed the industrial park the William D. Field Industrial Park in his honor; and

WHEREAS, greatly admired for his wisdom and expertise by all who knew him, Judge Bill Field was selected to serve on a number of advisory boards and commissions, including the Local Elected Officials of North Tennessee PIC Council, the Tennessee Air Pollution Board, the Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, and the Board of Directors of both Goodlark Regional Medical Center and Local Government Data Processing Corporation; and

WHEREAS, a man of enormous talent and ability, Judge Field played a vital role in a vast array of organizations, clubs, and activities which included being a member and past President of the Dickson Rotary Club; Board Member and Campaign Chair of the United Way of Dickson County, Chair of the Heart Fund Drive, a past President of the PTA, and a former President of the University of Tennessee Alumni Association; and

WHEREAS, active in numerous professional organizations, Judge William D. Field was a member and past President of Greater Nashville Regional Council and Development District, a member of the Mid-Cumberland Human Resource Agency, Tennessee Council of Juvenile Court Judges, Tennessee County Service Association, and Tennessee Executives Association; and

WHEREAS, Judge Bill Field was an active and faithful member of the First Baptist Church of Dickson, where he served as a Deacon and taught Sunday school for 40 years; and

WHEREAS, Bill Field was a devoted husband to his lovely wife, Marilyn Lightfoot Field, and was the very proud parent of sons Doug and Doug, and daughter-in-law, Paula Bradberry Field, Steve; and grandsons Matthew and Nathan; and

WHEREAS, it has been said that no one of his generation possessed a greater grasp of the importance of the heritage of Dickson County than Judge Bill Field. His recognition of its heritage, of both what had been and what could be and the necessity, at once, to preserve and procure its heritage for future generations was profoundly embodied in his vision. In his honor, the Dickson County Chamber of Commerce's Tourism Council developed the Judge William D. "Bill" Field Heritage Award; and

WHEREAS, Judge William D. Field, Sr.'s long and outstanding contributions to the growth and prosperity of Dickson County are worthy of our deep appreciation and have clearly helped make Dickson County what it is today; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we join with the citizens of Dickson County in celebrating their bicentennial and in specially honoring the many laudable contributions of Judge William D. Field, Sr. to the growth and prosperity of Dickson County and to the admirable quality of life enjoyed by its citizens.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation to family members of Judge William D. "Bill" Field, Sr. with this final clause omitted from such copy.